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Box #9
Odd Week
23 August 2017

Contents
Fennel
Cabbage
Cauliflower: Orange or Purple
Cucumber
Green Beans
Lettuce: Fusion, Green Leaf
Potatoes: Red
Zucchini: Mixed

New Stuff: cauliflower, fennel
Choice Box: it's a mystery . . .

Cauliflower has no saturated fat, is low in cholesterol, high in dietary fiber, vegetable protein, vitamins C, K and B6 as well as many minerals. Research has found that regularly eating cruciferous vegetables (broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, etc.) may lower your overall risk of cancer. (Broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts and olives have the highest concentration of plant sterols that can lower serum cholesterol.)
Like broccoli, a head of cauliflower is a collection of small flower buds. If left to mature, small, yellow flowers bloom all over the head.
Store cauliflower in the refrigerator, inside a plastic bag. It should keep for a week or 2. The sprayer on your sink does a great job of blasting off dirt and other debris.
This week, you're getting colored cauliflower.
Colored vegetables tend to lose some of their hue when cooked. To get their highest nutritional value (and best color), eat cauliflower raw.

Braised Cauliflower
In a Dutch oven large enough to cover the cauliflower with a little to spare, on high heat, put:
3 Tbsp. olive oil
Add: 1 Lg. onion, coarsely chopped
-sauté until the onion just starts to brown, stirring now and then.
Add: 3-4 garlic cloves, coarsely chopped
1 tsp. chili powder
1 tsp. paprika/smoked paprika
4 anchovies, chopped *optional*
1 tsp. capers *optional*
-sauté until the garlic just starts to brown, stirring constantly: this won't take long.
Add: 25 oz. can chopped tomatoes (3 cups)
1 Tbsp. red wine vinegar
1/3 cup Kalamata olives, pitted and halved
¼ cup chopped basil or parsley
Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
-stir to mix, then add:
1 lg. whole head cauliflower, core removed
-ladle some of the sauce over the cauliflower. Turn the heat to low, cover, and simmer until the cauliflower is tender, 30-40 minutes.
Fennel is a popular vegetable in Europe for its unique taste and ability to pair well with many other flavors. Fennel has been used for hundreds of years as an aid to digestion. It's high in vitamin A, calcium, potassium and iron. The bulb and leaves have a mild, black-licorice flavor that is very good in salads, especially coleslaw, vegetable dishes and with fish. The frugal cook likes it because all of fennel is edible: bulb, stalks and leaves. To use, cut off the top of the root from the bulb, which is tough, and chop off the leafy stalks for use later. Wash the bulb under cold, running water to get out any dirt that may have sifted down between the layers. Place the bulb flat on your cutting board and slice it in half. Set the cut side down on your board and slice lengthwise.
Use the feathery leaves as a fresh herb. They lose some flavor each day, so go thru them as quick as you can. Or, add them to your next batch of pesto, or potato salad. You can dry fennel leaves on paper towels in your microwave. Store the dried, chopped leaves with your other herbs. If you make stock, the fibrous stalks are an excellent flavoring. One of our site managers cuts the stalks into 4" lengths and stores them in a jar of water in her fridge: it's one of her children's favorite snacks. Like sugar cane, they chew on the stalks to get all the tasty, tender bits, then spit out the fibrous part.
Making an infusion (think tea) is a way to use a small amount of something, and get good flavor out of it. Here's how you can do that with your fennel:
Fennel with Fish
Clean the fennel as described above, reserving some fronds to add later. In a 10" sauté pan, over medium heat, add:
2 Tbsp. butter
2 Tbsp. olive oil
1-2 fennel bulbs, cleaned and sliced thinly
- sauté just until the fennel begins to brown.
Add: ½ cup water, stock or dry white wine

-add the stalks, cut into 4" lengths (so you can remove them later), cover the pan, turn the heat to low, and cook the fennel until it is completely soft, about 15 minutes. While the fennel cooks slowly and flavors the liquid, snip off the rest of the leaves and chop them up. When the fennel is done, push the pieces toward the sides. You should have a thin layer of fennel-infused liquid on the bottom of the pan. If you don't, add more water, stock or wine. Scrape the bottom of the pan to loosen any stuck-on bits (this is called "de-glazing"). Add enough fish to fill up the area inside the cooked ring of fennel, season with salt, freshly ground pepper, and half of the chopped fennel leaves if you intend to turn the fish over. If you're using thin fillets, like Tilapia, you won't need to turn them over, so sprinkle all of the chopped fennel over the top. Cover the pan again, and simmer slowly, just until the fish is no longer transparent in the middle, but is still moist. The length of time will depend on the thickness of the fish. The best rule I've found is the simplest: Measure the fish at its thickest point, and cook it 10 minutes per inch, regardless of the cooking method. The fennel bulb is tender and delicious, but the stalk will be too fibrous for eating, so remove the stalks before serving.

Chuck was rather dismayed to find that our cabbage had grown very large indeed. We have so many ginormous heads, we couldn't fit them in your boxes and put anything else in there, so we solved the problem by cutting the big heads in half. That used up most of them, so far. So, some Couple or EOW boxes will contain a half head of cabbage, weighing about 3 lbs. To help you use up all that cabbage, I've got a few terrific recipes.

CSA member Pavel Dimitrov sent in this link for Roasted Cabbage Steaks—looks great!
http://www.everydaymaven.com/2012/garlic-rubbed-roasted-cabbage-steaks/

The original recipe (below) is from Jacques Pepin. It is an elegant, delicious dish that is both easy and quick to make.

Cabbage with Shrimp *serves 4*

In a large saute pan over medium heat, put:
1 cup chicken or vegetable stock
Add: 6 cups cabbage, chopped into ¼"x2" pieces (any kind of green cabbage will work)
2 lg. cloves garlic, chopped coarsely
-Cook for 8-10 minutes, covered.
Add: 1 cup heavy cream
1 Tbsp. Dijon or brown mustard
¼ cup white wine (**dry**, not sweet)
-Stir and simmer for a few minutes to evaporate the alcohol.
Add: 1 lb. shrimp, shelled completely
salt & pepper to taste
-Stir, cover, and cook just until shrimp are done. Serve as is, over rice or noodles or whatever you like.

NOTE: I would not substitute 2% milk or anything else for the heavy cream in this recipe—the taste is worth the extra calories. And, cream does not curdle when boiled, so you can simmer your shrimp with an easy mind.

At this time of year, our lettuce often develops a bit of powdery mildew. This expresses as small spots near the top of the leaves. Some of the heads will have a bit of powdery mildew. If you find it, just remove that part of the leaf and use the rest. It seems a shame to throw an entire leaf away when only the top inch is spotted. Rain and heavy morning dews contribute to this problem since fungus loves moisture.

Field Notes

Thursday's rains gave us 1.5", which gave our transplants a good drink. The lettuce, kale, spinach and cabbage look great.

The Monday night/Tuesday morning rains did not materialize at our farm, so the ground can continue to dry. We may even have to lay out some drip tape!

We're sure you're going to be happy to hear that the zucchini plants are slowing down considerably. They've all developed powdery mildew (a fungal disease they are prone to, especially in wet years), and are blooming far less, so far fewer fruits.

Chuck has been keeping his eye on our melons, which are coming along well. He says we'll have watermelons for you in the next few weeks. Chuck likes this small, yellow, seeded watermelon, complex flavor, sweet. We've grown a few seedless watermelons in the past, but they don't have the flavor of one with seeds. Cantaloupes will arrive soon after that.

This seems like a good time to remind everyone to **read the CSA Member Handbook**. This information is located on our website, under "CSA". It tells you what to do if you can't get to your pickup site during pickup times, how we handle any box mixups, and a whole host of other questions we would have to answer over and over if we hadn't put those answers down in this handy little "booklet".

Enjoy the cooler, but sunny, weather.

Terry & Chuck